

109TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3545

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve services for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 20, 2006

Mr. CRAIG (for himself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BURR, and Mr. OBAMA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve services for homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Comprehensive Home-
5 less Veterans Assistance and Prevention Act of 2006”.

6 **SEC. 2. REAFFIRMATION OF NATIONAL GOAL TO END**
7 **HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS.**

8 (a) REAFFIRMATION.—Congress reaffirms the na-
9 tional goal to end chronic homelessness among veterans
10 within a decade of the enactment of the Homeless Vet-

1 erans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001 (Public Law
2 107–95; 115 Stat. 903).

3 (b) REAFFIRMATION OF ENCOURAGEMENT OF COOP-
4 ERATIVE EFFORTS.—Congress reaffirms its encourage-
5 ment, as specified in the Homeless Veterans Comprehen-
6 sive Assistance Act of 2001 (Public Law 107–95; 115
7 Stat. 903), that all departments and agencies of the Fed-
8 eral, State, and local governments, quasi-governmental or-
9 ganizations, private and public sector entities, including
10 community-based organizations, faith-based organizations,
11 and individuals, work cooperatively to end chronic home-
12 lessness among veterans.

13 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON THE RESPONSE OF THE**
14 **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO THE NEEDS OF**
15 **HOMELESS VETERANS.**

16 It is the sense of Congress that—

17 (1) homelessness is a significant problem in the
18 veterans community, and veterans are disproportion-
19 ately represented among homeless men;

20 (2) while many effective programs assist home-
21 less veterans to become, once again, productive and
22 self-sufficient members of their communities and so-
23 ciety, all the essential services, assistance, and sup-
24 port that homeless veterans require are not currently
25 provided;

1 (3) federally funded programs for homeless vet-
 2 erans should be held accountable for achieving clear-
 3 ly defined results;

4 (4) Federal efforts to assist homeless veterans
 5 should include prevention of homelessness;

6 (5) Federal efforts regarding homeless veterans
 7 should be particularly vigorous where women vet-
 8 erans have minor children in their care;

9 (6) Federal agencies, particularly the Depart-
 10 ment of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor,
 11 and the Department of Housing and Urban Develop-
 12 ment, should cooperate more fully to address the
 13 problem of homelessness among veterans; and

14 (7) the programs reauthorized by this Act pro-
 15 vide important housing and services to homeless vet-
 16 erans.

17 **SEC. 4. PERMANENT AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS FOR**
 18 **COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE PROGRAMS FOR**
 19 **HOMELESS VETERANS.**

20 (a) PERMANENT AUTHORITY.—Section 2011(a) of
 21 title 38, United States Code, is amended—

22 (1) by striking paragraph (2); and

23 (2) in paragraph (1)—

24 (A) by striking “(1)”; and

1 (B) by redesignating subparagraphs (A)
 2 through (D) as paragraphs (1) through (4), re-
 3 spectively.

4 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—The text
 5 of section 2013 of such title is amended to read as follows:
 6 “There are authorized to be appropriated, to carry out this
 7 subchapter, \$130,000,000 for fiscal year 2007 and each
 8 fiscal year thereafter.”.

9 **SEC. 5. EXTENSION OF TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION**
 10 **FOR SERIOUSLY MENTALLY ILL AND HOME-**
 11 **LESS VETERANS.**

12 (a) EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR GENERAL
 13 TREATMENT.—Section 2031(b) of title 38, United States
 14 Code, is amended by striking “2006” and inserting
 15 “2011”.

16 (b) EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR ADDITIONAL
 17 SERVICES.—Section 2033(d) of such title is amended by
 18 striking “2006” and inserting “2011”.

19 **SEC. 6. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR TRANSFER OF**
 20 **PROPERTIES OBTAINED THROUGH FORE-**
 21 **CLOSURE OF HOME MORTGAGES.**

22 Section 2041(c) of title 38, United States Code, is
 23 amended by striking “2008” and inserting “2011”.

1 **SEC. 7. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR GRANT PROGRAM**
2 **FOR HOMELESS VETERANS WITH SPECIAL**
3 **NEEDS.**

4 Section 2061(c)(1) of title 38, United States Code,
5 is amended by striking “2003, 2004, and 2005,
6 \$5,000,000” and inserting “2007 through 2011,
7 \$7,000,000”.

8 **SEC. 8. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR HOMELESS VETERAN**
9 **SERVICE PROVIDER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**
10 **PROGRAM.**

11 Subsection (b) of section 2064 of title 38, United
12 States Code, is amended to read as follows:

13 “(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
14 are authorized to be appropriated \$1,000,000 for each of
15 fiscal years 2007 through 2012 to carry out the program
16 under this section.”.

17 **SEC. 9. ADDITIONAL ELEMENT IN ANNUAL REPORT ON AS-**
18 **SISTANCE TO HOMELESS VETERANS.**

19 Section 2065(b) of title 38, United States Code, is
20 amended—

21 (1) by redesignating paragraph (5) as para-
22 graph (6); and

23 (2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the fol-
24 lowing new paragraph (5):

25 “(5) Information on the efforts of the Secretary
26 to coordinate the delivery of housing and services to

1 homeless veterans with other Federal departments
 2 and agencies, including—

3 “(A) the Department of Defense;

4 “(B) the Department of Health and
 5 Human Services;

6 “(C) the Department of Housing and
 7 Urban Development;

8 “(D) the Department of Justice;

9 “(E) the Department of Labor;

10 “(F) the Interagency Council on Homeless-
 11 ness;

12 “(G) the Social Security Administration;
 13 and

14 “(H) any other Federal department or
 15 agency with which the Secretary coordinates the
 16 delivery of housing and services to homeless vet-
 17 erans.”.

18 **SEC. 10. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS.**

19 (a) **ADDITIONAL EX OFFICIO MEMBERS.**—Sub-
 20 section (a)(3) of section 2066 of title 38, United States
 21 Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new
 22 subparagraphs:

23 “(E) The Executive Director of the Interagency
 24 Council on Homelessness (or a representative of the
 25 Executive Director).

1 “(F) The Under Secretary for Health (or a rep-
 2 resentative of the Under Secretary after consultation
 3 with the Director of the Office of Homeless Veterans
 4 Programs).

5 “(G) The Under Secretary for Benefits (or a
 6 representative of the Under Secretary after consulta-
 7 tion with the Director of the Office of Homeless Vet-
 8 erans Programs).”.

9 (b) EXTENSION.—Subsection (d) of such section is
 10 amended by striking “December 31, 2006” and inserting
 11 “September 30, 2011”.

12 **SEC. 11. RENTAL ASSISTANCE VOUCHERS FOR VETERANS**
 13 **AFFAIRS SUPPORTED HOUSING PROGRAM.**

14 (a) FUNDING FOR VOUCHERS.—Section
 15 (8)(o)(19)(B) of the United States Housing Act of 1937
 16 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)(B)) is amended to read as fol-
 17 lows:

18 “(B) AMOUNT.—The amount specified in
 19 this subparagraph is—

20 “(i) for fiscal year 2007, the amount
 21 necessary to provide 500 vouchers for rent-
 22 al assistance under this subsection;

23 “(ii) for fiscal year 2008, the amount
 24 necessary to provide 1,000 vouchers for
 25 rental assistance under this subsection;

1 “(iii) for fiscal year 2009, the amount
 2 necessary to provide 1,500 vouchers for
 3 rental assistance under this subsection;

4 “(iv) for fiscal year 2010, the amount
 5 necessary to provide 2,000 vouchers for
 6 rental assistance under this subsection;
 7 and

8 “(v) for fiscal year 2011, the amount
 9 necessary to provide 2,500 vouchers for
 10 rental assistance under this subsection.”.

11 (b) ELIMINATION OF FUNDING THROUGH INCRE-
 12 MENTAL ASSISTANCE.—Subparagraph (C) of section
 13 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (19
 14 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)(C)) is repealed.

15 (c) STUDY OF EFFECTIVENESS OF VOUCHERS.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—For fiscal years 2007 and
 17 2008, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall con-
 18 duct a study of the effectiveness of the voucher pro-
 19 gram under section (8)(o)(19)(B) of the United
 20 States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C.
 21 1437f(o)(19)(B)), as amended by subsection (a), in
 22 meeting the housing and case management needs of
 23 homeless veterans who—

24 (A) have a chronic mental illnesses or
 25 chronic substance use disorder; and

1 (B) are participating in continuing treat-
2 ment for such mental illness or substance use
3 disorder as a condition of receipt of such rental
4 assistance.

5 (2) COMPARISON.—As part of the study re-
6 quired by paragraph (1) the Secretary shall compare
7 the results of the program described in that para-
8 graph with other programs as follows:

9 (A) Programs in which the Department of
10 Veterans Affairs coordinates the delivery of
11 housing and services to homeless veterans.

12 (B) Programs for the provision of grants
13 or per diem payments to providers of services
14 that are designed to meet the needs of homeless
15 veterans.

16 (3) CRITERIA.—In conducting the comparison
17 required by paragraph (2), the Secretary shall exam-
18 ine the following:

19 (A) The satisfaction of veterans targeted
20 by the programs described in paragraph (2).

21 (B) The health status of such veterans.

22 (C) For programs that address substance
23 use disorders, the reduction in severity of such
24 disorders in such veterans.

1 (D) The housing provided such veterans
2 under such programs.

3 (E) The degree to which such veterans are
4 encouraged to productive activity by such pro-
5 grams.

6 (4) REPORT.—Not later than March 31, 2009,
7 the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Vet-
8 erans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on
9 Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a
10 report on the results of the study required by para-
11 graph (1).

12 **SEC. 12. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR SUPPORTIVE SERV-**
13 **ICES FOR VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMI-**
14 **LIES IN PERMANENT HOUSING.**

15 (a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to fa-
16 cilitate the provision of supportive services for very low-
17 income veteran families in permanent housing.

18 (b) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter V of chapter 20
20 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by add-
21 ing at the end the following new section:

1 **“§ 2044. Financial assistance for supportive services**
2 **for very low-income veteran families in**
3 **permanent housing**

4 “(a) DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

5 (1) The Secretary shall provide financial assistance to eli-
6 gible entities approved under this section to provide and
7 coordinate the provision of supportive services described
8 in subsection (b) for very low-income veteran families oc-
9 cupying permanent housing.

10 “(2) Financial assistance under this section shall con-
11 sist of per diem payments for each such family for which
12 an approved eligible entity is providing or coordinating the
13 provision of supportive services.

14 “(3)(A) Subject to the availability of appropriations
15 provided for such purpose, the Secretary shall provide to
16 each family for which an approved eligible entity is pro-
17 viding or coordinating the provision of supportive services
18 per diem payments in the amount of the daily cost of care
19 estimated by such eligible entity (as adjusted by the Sec-
20 retary under subparagraph (C)).

21 “(B) In no case may the amount of per diem paid
22 under this paragraph exceed the rate of per diem author-
23 ized for State homes for domiciliary care under subsection
24 (a)(1)(A) of section 1741 of this title, as adjusted by the
25 Secretary under subsection (c) of such section.

1 “(C) The Secretary may adjust the daily cost of care
2 estimated by an eligible entity for purposes of this para-
3 graph to exclude other sources of income described in sub-
4 paragraph (E) that the eligible entity certifies to be cor-
5 rect.

6 “(D) Each eligible entity shall provide to the Sec-
7 retary such information with respect to other sources of
8 income as the Secretary may require to make the adjust-
9 ment under subparagraph (C).

10 “(E) The other sources of income referred to in sub-
11 paragraphs (C) and (D) are payments to the eligible entity
12 for furnishing services to homeless veterans under pro-
13 grams other than under this subchapter, including pay-
14 ments and grants from other departments and agencies
15 of the Federal Government, from departments or agencies
16 of State or local government, and from private entities or
17 organizations.

18 “(4) In providing financial assistance under para-
19 graph (1), the Secretary shall give preference to entities
20 providing or coordinating the provision of supportive serv-
21 ices for very low-income veteran families who are
22 transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing.

23 “(5) The Secretary shall ensure that, to the extent
24 practicable, financial assistance under this subsection is

1 equitably distributed across geographic regions, including
 2 rural communities and tribal lands.

3 “(6) Each entity receiving financial assistance under
 4 this section to provide supportive services to a very low-
 5 income veteran family shall notify that family that such
 6 services are being paid for, in whole or in part, by the
 7 Department.

8 “(7) The Secretary may require entities receiving fi-
 9 nancial assistance under this section to submit a report
 10 to the Secretary that describes the projects carried out
 11 with such financial assistance.

12 “(b) SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.—The supportive serv-
 13 ices referred to in subsection (a) are the following:

14 “(1) Services provided by an eligible entity or
 15 subcontractors that address the needs of very low-in-
 16 come veteran families occupying permanent housing,
 17 including—

18 “(A) outreach services;

19 “(B) health care services, including diag-
 20 nosis, treatment, and counseling for mental
 21 health and substance abuse disorders and for
 22 post-traumatic stress disorder, if such services
 23 are not readily available through the Depart-
 24 ment medical center serving the geographic
 25 area in which the veteran family is housed;

- 1 “(C) habilitation and rehabilitation serv-
2 ices;
3 “(D) case management services;
4 “(E) daily living services;
5 “(F) personal financial planning;
6 “(G) transportation services;
7 “(H) vocational counseling;
8 “(I) employment and training;
9 “(J) educational services;
10 “(K) assistance in obtaining veterans bene-
11 fits and other public benefits, including health
12 care provided by the Department;
13 “(L) assistance in obtaining income sup-
14 port;
15 “(M) assistance in obtaining health insur-
16 ance;
17 “(N) fiduciary and representative payee
18 services;
19 “(O) legal services to assist the veteran
20 family with reconsiderations or appeals of vet-
21 erans and public benefit claim denials and to
22 resolve outstanding warrants that interfere with
23 the family’s ability to obtain or retain housing
24 or supportive services;
25 “(P) child care;

1 “(Q) housing counseling;

2 “(R) other services necessary for maintain-
3 ing independent living; and

4 “(S) coordination of services under this
5 paragraph.

6 “(2) Services described in paragraph (1) that
7 are delivered to very low-income veteran families
8 who are homeless and who are scheduled to become
9 residents of permanent housing within 90 days
10 pending the location or development of housing suit-
11 able for permanent housing.

12 “(3) Services described in paragraph (1) for
13 very low-income veteran families who have volun-
14 tarily chosen to seek other housing after a period of
15 tenancy in permanent housing, that are provided, for
16 a period of 90 days after such families exit perma-
17 nent housing or until such families commence re-
18 ceipt of other housing services adequate to meet
19 their current needs, but only to the extent that serv-
20 ices under this paragraph are designed to support
21 such families in their choice to transition into hous-
22 ing that is responsive to their individual needs and
23 preferences.

24 “(c) APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

25 (1) An eligible entity seeking financial assistance under

1 subsection (a) shall submit an application to the Secretary
2 in such form, in such manner, and containing such com-
3 mitments and information as the Secretary determines to
4 be necessary to carry out this section.

5 “(2) Each application submitted by an eligible entity
6 under paragraph (1) shall contain—

7 “(A) a description of the supportive services
8 proposed to be provided by the eligible entity;

9 “(B) a description of the types of very low-in-
10 come veteran families proposed to be provided such
11 services;

12 “(C) an estimate of the number of very low-in-
13 come veteran families proposed to be provided such
14 services;

15 “(D) evidence of the experience of the eligible
16 entity in providing supportive services to very low-in-
17 come veteran families; and

18 “(E) a description of the managerial capacity of
19 the eligible entity to—

20 “(i) coordinate the provision of supportive
21 services with the provision of permanent hous-
22 ing, by the eligible entity or by other organiza-
23 tions;

1 “(ii) continuously assess the needs of very
2 low-income veteran families for supportive serv-
3 ices;

4 “(iii) coordinate the provision of supportive
5 services with the services of the Department;

6 “(iv) tailor supportive services to the needs
7 of very low-income veteran families; and

8 “(v) continuously seek new sources of as-
9 sistance to ensure the long-term provision of
10 supportive services to very low-income veteran
11 families.

12 “(3) The Secretary shall establish criteria for the se-
13 lection of eligible entities to be provided financial assist-
14 ance under this section.

15 “(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—(1) The Secretary
16 shall provide training and technical assistance to partici-
17 pating eligible entities regarding the planning, develop-
18 ment, and provision of supportive services to very low-in-
19 come veteran families occupying permanent housing.

20 “(2) The Secretary may provide the training de-
21 scribed in paragraph (1) directly or through grants or con-
22 tracts with appropriate public or nonprofit private entities.

23 “(e) FUNDING.—(1) From amounts appropriated to
24 the Department for Medical Care, there shall be available
25 to carry out this section amounts as follows:

1 “(A) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2007.

2 “(B) \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2008.

3 “(C) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2009.

4 “(2) Not more than \$750,000 may be available under
5 paragraph (1) in any fiscal year to provide technical as-
6 sistance under subsection (d).

7 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 “(1) The term ‘consumer cooperative’ has the
9 meaning given such term in section 202 of the
10 Housing Act of 1959 (12 U.S.C. 1701q).

11 “(2) The term ‘eligible entity’ means—

12 “(A) a private nonprofit organization; or

13 “(B) a consumer cooperative.

14 “(3) The term ‘homeless’ has the meaning
15 given that term in section 103 of the McKinney-
16 Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302).

17 “(4) The term ‘permanent housing’ means com-
18 munity-based housing without a designated length of
19 stay.

20 “(5) The term ‘private nonprofit organization’
21 means any of the following:

22 “(A) Any incorporated private institution
23 or foundation—

1 “(i) no part of the net earnings of
2 which inures to the benefit of any member,
3 founder, contributor, or individual;

4 “(ii) which has a governing board that
5 is responsible for the operation of the sup-
6 portive services provided under this sec-
7 tion; and

8 “(iii) which is approved by the Sec-
9 retary as to financial responsibility.

10 “(B) A for-profit limited partnership, the
11 sole general partner of which is an organization
12 meeting the requirements of clauses (i), (ii),
13 and (iii) of subparagraph (A).

14 “(C) A corporation wholly owned and con-
15 trolled by an organization meeting the require-
16 ments of clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) of subpara-
17 graph (A).

18 “(D) A tribally designated housing entity
19 (as defined in section 4 of the Native American
20 Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act
21 of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103)).

22 “(6)(A) Subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C),
23 the term ‘very low-income veteran family’ means a
24 veteran family whose income does not exceed 50 per-
25 cent of the median income for the area, as deter-

1 mined by the Secretary in accordance with this para-
2 graph.

3 “(B) The Secretary shall make appropriate ad-
4 justments to the income requirement under subpara-
5 graph (A) based on family size.

6 “(C) The Secretary may establish an income
7 ceiling higher or lower than 50 percent of the me-
8 dian income for an area if the Secretary determines
9 that such variations are necessary because the area
10 has unusually high or low construction costs, fair
11 market rents (as determined under section 8 of the
12 United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C.
13 1437f)), or family incomes.

14 “(7) The term ‘veteran family’ includes a vet-
15 eran who is a single person and a family in which
16 the head of household or the spouse of the head of
17 household is a veteran.”.

18 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
19 tions at the beginning of chapter 20 of such title is
20 amended by inserting after the item relating to sec-
21 tion 2043 the following new item:

“2044. Financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran
families in permanent housing.”.

22 (c) STUDY OF EFFECTIVENESS OF PERMANENT
23 HOUSING PROGRAM.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—For fiscal years 2007 and
2 2008, the Secretary shall conduct a study of the ef-
3 fectiveness of the permanent housing program under
4 section 2044 of title 38, United States Code, as
5 amended by subsection (b), in meeting the needs of
6 very low-income veteran families, as that term is de-
7 fined in that section.

8 (2) COMPARISON.—In the study required by
9 paragraph (1), the Secretary shall compare the re-
10 sults of the program referred to in that subsection
11 with other programs of the Department of Veterans
12 Affairs dedicated to the delivery of housing and serv-
13 ices to veterans.

14 (3) CRITERIA.—In making the comparison re-
15 quired in paragraph (2), the Secretary shall examine
16 the following:

17 (A) The satisfaction of veterans targeted
18 by the programs described in paragraph (2).

19 (B) The health status of such veterans.

20 (C) The housing provided such veterans
21 under such programs.

22 (D) The degree to which such veterans are
23 encouraged to productive activity by such pro-
24 grams.

1 (4) REPORT.—Not later than March 31, 2009,
2 the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Vet-
3 erans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on
4 Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a
5 report on the results of the study required by para-
6 graph (1).

○